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Psychology the Ally of Religion.

Rev. John Kelman, in his new book on *The Faith of Robert Louis Stevenson*, gives an exceedingly interesting presentation of the great novelist's religious conceptions, which he describes as true Christian faith. In the course of his discussion he has the following valuable paragraph: The interpretation of religious experiences in terms of the general laws of psychology has given alarm needlessly, though not unnaturally, to some believers. These have fallen into the same fallacy as that to which Darwin's critics have often succumbed: they have forgotten that to explain the process of a phenomenon is not to explain its ultimate causes, or to deny to it the operation of those hidden spiritual forces with which Christianity has familiarized us. Spiritual experience would be no less divine though we were able to trace it point by point along a sequence of psychological processes to the point at which the soul of man receives from God his authentic revelation. Divineness does not consist in unintelligibility, nor is it the sole attribute of God that he hides himself from sight. So far from being in any way a menace to religion, psychology may be and has been among the most valuable of its allies. The worst feature about religion, as it has often been understood, is its aloofness from the ordinary facts of life, and its severance of the sacred from the secular. The inevitable result for the majority of men must be a deadening of the religious interest, and a more or less gloomy sense of remoteness in sacred things. The temptation to pessimism, or at least discouragement, comes to all men from the disheartening experience of their daily conflicts and defeats. But those whose religion is held apart have no defense against it, the God whom their theory has isolated from life being "far off from helping them." To such men the new spirit offers a God who is near at hand, a Word which is nigh them, in their mouth and in their heart. The result is immediate in the spring of quickened vital interest and enthusiasm, in an optimistic view of life and a gospel of health and gladness.

The Principles of True Freedom.

A series of lectures given before the students of King's College, London, in 1902, is now published under the title, *The Religious Sense in its Scientific Aspect*. The lectures are by Greville Macdonald, M.D. The three lectures deal respectively with "The Religion of Service," "The Religion of Renunciation," and "The Religion of Freedom."

The closing pages of the book contain a statement regarding the principles of true freedom which it is desirable to quote:

The principles of Protestantism are still strong with us, in our religion, our state, and our science; and they must be strong if we would grow as individuals or as a nation. The principles of democracy must as certainly be strong within us if our religious sense is to have freedom to grow. And when I say the *principles* of Protestantism and democracy, I do not mean to offer one word or another concerning dogmas which may or may not be the outcome of these principles. I do not stand in criticism of the teachings of theology, nor do I pronounce opinion upon this or that political measure or party. The principles of anything are the germinal beginnings which gave rise to that thing and inspire it throughout the whole period of its vitality. And the principles of Protestantism are the principles of democracy; they are the freedom to be guided by the law—freedom to do that to which all are inspired by the elemental and dominant force of life. The principle of life is freedom to grow in obedience. The principle of Protestantism is the right of the individual to think in accordance with the light given his mind and his conscience, provided these stand reverential and disciplined in humility before the law. The principle of democracy is the right of the individual to act as his sense of right instructs him, provided he looks upon charity as the beacon-light of conduct. Both Protestantism and democracy are incompatible with self-seeking or the lust of power or the craving for unearned riches. Both Protestantism and democracy, I hold—and some at least among you will not dispute it—can exist in purity only when their meaning is defined in the words of the Sermon on the Mount, despite the arguments of the political economist as to the unpractical nature of its doctrines. Protestantism and democracy, then, whether judged in the light of Christ's teachings or in the spirit of philosophic freedom, mean but one thing: the eternal worth of the individual in the cosmic law. To hold that man's chief value lies in the fact that he is an item in the construction of a whole, be that whole a church or a state, is, if you allow the theory its logical conclusion, to justify clericalism on the one hand, socialism on the other; and both represent the very antithesis of that individualism which I say is the basis of Christianity, the spirit of Protestantism, the aim of democracy.

It may appear to some that the very idea of freedom implies a sense inimical to that of obligation and obedience; you may say that our only thought, when we desire freedom, is to be quit of our obligations,

even if these be the exalted obligations of service, but especially if they necessitate renunciation of individual rights. But if you claim this, you are putting an interpretation upon the word "freedom" which is not sanctioned by reason. I conceive that in your sense of the word you would wish to be free to choose what you would have, uninfluenced by any impulsion or obligation from the outside; for to be impelled by any motive whatever is to be a slave to that motive. In other words, you would prefer to act without any definite purpose in view: for to have purpose would be, for you, to act under obligation to that purpose, which is the *reductio ad absurdum*. Not God himself can act without the motive and obligation of his purpose; and therefore, according to your idea of freedom, no divine being, however omnipotent, could be really free in action unless untrammelled by obligation and motive—unless, indeed, you can imagine a God who should create without any idea of what he was going to make! No, the whole conception of freedom is opportunity to grow in obedience to the law of our highest nature, unhindered, except so far as hindrances that we can overcome will strengthen in us the power to grow. A man's freedom is shown, not in carving out his own fancied idea of what is good for him, but in choosing which course he will pursue: the easy and slothful and parasitic, which will save him from the labor of obedience and that increase of obligation which work eternally brings; or the difficult, strenuous, and independent course, in the pursuit of which he attains freedom and power in an increasing conformity with the eternal Will.